Black-eyed Susan is a bright, cheerful wildflower found throughout Florida. Its compound flower head consists of many long yellow ray florets surrounding a core of dark purple to brown disk florets. Each solitary flowerhead is born on a rough, erect stem that emerges from a basal rosette of bristly leaves. Leaves along the stem are alternately arranged, with toothed margins and rough surfaces. Seeds are tiny black achenes. Depending on the conditions, black-eyed Susan can perform as a short-lived perennial, biennial or annual.

Black-eyed Susan typically blooms in spring through fall and occurs naturally in flatwoods, sandhills, open disturbed areas and along roadsides. It is pollinated by a variety of insects, and its seeds are eaten by seed-eating birds.

**Family:** Asteraceae (Aster or Composite family)

**Native range:** Nearly throughout Florida

To see where natural populations of Black-eyed Susan have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

**Hardiness:** Zones 7–10

**Soil:** Rich, well-drained soils

**Exposure:** Full sun to minimal shade

**Growth habit:** 1–3’ tall with 1–2’ spread

**Propagation:** Seeds

**Garden tips:** Black-eyed Susans are easy to grow and maintain. They spread by way of abundant self-sown seed. They are adaptable to both dry and moist sites, but flower best with regular moisture. They are excellent for mixed wildflower gardens, and disturbed areas such as roadsides and medians.

**Note:** There are two forms of *Rudbeckia hirta* found naturally in Florida — *R. hirta* var. *angustifolia* in the northern third of the state, and *R. hirta* var. *floridana* in the central and southern part of Florida. Both forms are typically available from native nurseries and they usually sell the form most common to their latitude, however, when purchasing *R. hirta* for your landscape, be sure to ask which variety is being sold. Non-native varieties are not recommended. (Source: Craig Huegel)

Black-eyed Susan are often available from the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com. Plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.